



P350-14

# THE DE LOTBINIERES.

A BIT OF CANADIAN ROMANCE AND HISTORY.

BY  
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Reprinted from the New England  
Hist. and Gen. Register for January  
1896.

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[Reprinted from the New-England Hist. and Gen. Register for January, 1896.]

D. CLAPP & SON, Printers.  
291 CONGRESS STREET, BOSTON.

## THE DE LOTBINIERES.

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THE evening carillon was trembling on the summer air, and Stockbridge street was all aglow with slanting sunbeams, when I was aroused from musing by my host\* of the Red Lion Inn placing in my hand a small roll of time-stained manuscript. "A bundle of old French letters, containing an autograph of Montcalm," he remarked, knowing our congenial tastes, and I, delighted at the prospect of an evening's agreeable occupation, was soon at work over the treasure-trove. How well the trouble of straightening out and arranging the crumpled papers was repaid, the following notes, somewhat extended from memoranda jotted down at the time, may give an idea.

There were in all fourteen letters, evidently part of the family archives of the De Lotbinières, a race which had reached Canada, about 1646, in the person of Louis-Théandre Chartier de Lotbinière, who became "Lieutenant Général Civil et Criminel de la Prévoté de Québec," in which city he was buried Sept. 11, 1690, aged 78. To his earliest progenitor, born about 1320, as we learn from Tanguay, his line of descent ran back through nine preceding generations, as follows: René-Pierre,<sup>1</sup> Alain,<sup>2</sup> Pierre,<sup>3</sup> Alain,<sup>4</sup> Clement,<sup>5</sup> César,<sup>6</sup> Alain,<sup>7</sup> Philippe,<sup>8</sup> and Joseph,<sup>9</sup> of Dijon. Pierre, a son of Clement, born about 1490, and a Councillor to the Parliament of Paris, was the first to adopt the suffix of De Lotbinière, which became the family name in the eighth generation.

Louis-Théandre,<sup>10</sup> who had married at Paris, Aug. 16, 1641, Marie-Elizabeth d'Amours de Clignancourt, had two children: René-Louis, born 1642, and Marie-Françoise, who was five years younger. The latter married, Oct. 17, 1672, Pierre de Joybert, Seigneur de Marçon et de Soulanges, Commandant en Acadie, and their daughter Louise-Elizabeth, b. Aug. 18, 1673, at the River St. John, Acadie, bapt. in Quebec, June 15, 1675, became the wife, Nov. 21, 1690, of Philippe de Rigaud, Chev. de Vaudreuil, Gov. of Montreal. De Rigaud, subsequently the Marquis de Vaudreuil, was, in 1703, Gov. of New France, and died in 1725, aged 82.

Réne-Louis Chartier de Lotbinière,<sup>11</sup> b. 1642; King's Councillor 1674, and, like his father, Lieut.-Gén. Civil et Criminel; as lieutenant of a militia company of Quebec, he was present, Oct. 17, 1666, when the Sieur de Bois took possession of Andaraque and other posts of the Iroquois; and as Col. of the Quebec Regt., he was at Fort Frontenac in the summer of 1684, in the rear-guard of the French expedition against the Senecas. He married Jan. 24, 1678, at Quebec, Marie-Madeleine Lambert, and was buried June 4, 1709. Of his sons: Eustache Chartier<sup>12</sup>, bapt. Dec. 15, 1688, m. April 14, 1711, Marie-Françoise Renaud, who d. April 25, 1723, aged 30. He had been an Ensign in the troops, been recommended May 6, 1719, by his kinsman, the Governor, to fill a vacancy in the Superior Council, and continued to hold that office until his decease. The vacancy had been caused by the

\* Mr. C. H. Plumb.

recent death of Claude de Berman, the aged *Sieur de la Martinière*, Judge, Counsellor, and *Lieut.-Gén. Civil et Crim.* This latter distinction, held by the *Sieur de Lotbinière's* family through two generations, had been bestowed by the King upon Martin, *Sieur du Lino*, against which choice Eustache made bold to protest and apply for the position himself. The reply, being No. 1 of the documents I had the pleasure of examining, is dated Paris, Sept. 1, 1719, and was written by Victor Marie, Duc d'Estrées, Maréchal de France. The services of Lotbinière's father and grandfather, in behalf of their King and the Colony, are acknowledged, but the applicant is admonished not to regard certain offices as family heir-looms; to endeavor, rather, to render himself worthy of preferment, &c., &c.

After his wife's death, in 1723, the young man turned his mind to more serious occupation; was ordained a priest, April 14, 1726; became Archdeacon and Dean of the Quebec Cathedral, and was there buried Feb. 14, 1749. His youngest child was:

Michel-Alain<sup>2</sup>, *Chartier de Lotbinière*, bapt. April 12, 1723; cadet (marine), 1736; ensign, 1742; made the campaign of Acadie 1746; and was Captain 1757. The Gov.-Gen., the Marquis de La Galissonnière (the same who afterwards defeated Admiral Byng, before Minorca), writing from Quebec, Oct. 20, 1748, to the Minister of Marine, states that he has employed the *Sieur de Lotbinière* as assistant engineer. Letters Nos. 2 and 3 were from Galissonnière to Lotbinière; the first, dated Paris, Monday, Sept. 24, 1752, stating that the writer is about sending 1200 livres for the benefit of M. de Lotbinière, M. des Essarts, and M. de Lusignan, and counts upon their standing by each other like good comrades. The other, addressed to M. de L., Royal Engineer at Quebec, is from Paris, Feb. 19, 1754; a long, friendly, interesting letter of six pages, touching principally on military matters and the fortifications at Quebec and Louisbourg. The writer also observes that "the mounting for the electrical globe, which you left me, is not sent, because, as you remarked on the paper in which it was wrapped, it was necessary to send, at the same time, a pneumatic machine (air pump), and, as you know, they never have what you want, I thought best to send you instruments which might be of use."

Meanwhile the young engineer had married, and Col. Franquet, who had been at Louisbourg since the summer of 1750, writes him (No. 4) from that point, Jan. 4, 1755, confirming his (Franquet's) recent appointment as Director of Fortifications in North America, and presents his respects to Madam de Lotbinière.

No. 5 is a letter from the Marquis de Vaudreuil, Gov.-Gen. of New France, dated Montreal, Sept. 15, 1756, to "M. de Lotbinière, ingénieur a Carillon," better known to us as Fort Ticonderoga. The writer assures his kinsman (they were second cousins) that he alone has the principal direction of the works at Carillon, and urges him to press them forward at his best and to the satisfaction of M. le Marquis de Montcalm; that Madam de Vaudreuil thanks him for his kind remembrance, &c. Portion of a seal impression in red wax is attached to the letter, being a lion rampant on a plain shield, with a lightly draped winged figure to the left as a supporter, while, pendant from the shield, hangs a military order, consisting of eight cannons joined together as a star. The writer, Pierre-François, Marquis de Vaudreuil-Cavagnal, b. 1698, was the third son of the former Governor General, to which position he himself attained in 1755; the last to hold that position under the French.

Nov. 2, 1756, Lotbinière applied to the Minister of Marine for the position of Engineer-in-Chief of the Colony, as held by his late father-in-law

De Lévy, and some two years later, writing to Marshal de Belle Isle, he says, "I flatter myself, my Lord, that you will be pleased to have the Cross of St. Louis conferred upon me. 'Tis a favor, I dare say, I have merited by the zeal I have evinced on all occasions" The Marshal's comments upon him as an officer can be seen in the New York Col. MSS., vol. x. 889.

No. 6, from the Marquis de Montcalm, is in answer to a demand for sixty carpenters. From Portage Camp, August 19, 1757, the Marquis states that he sends what he can from the various regiments, &c.

In No. 7 we have the most interesting manuscript of the series, being the "Continuation of a journal from July, 1758, to M. de Lotbinière's return, Jan. 10, 1761, to Paris," according to the heading. Unfortunately the twenty-four pages preserved terminate with the 22d of May, 1759. He had left Carillon, July 15, 1758, he writes, suffering from inflammation of the lungs, brought on by his exertions; but a few months' rest at Quebec, and a milk diet, had about restored him to health. Rumors were continually reaching them as to the designs of the English for gaining possession of Canada; Louisbourg, &c., are already in the hands of the enemy. Feb. 7th he sets out for Montreal, where he arrives five days later, and, with De Vaudreuil, discusses plans for the approaching campaign; he also learns from the Governor the defensive plan of Lieut.-Col. M. de Pontleroy. Engineer-in-Chief for Quebec, a plan which embraces the district from the Falls of Montmorency to the river St. Charles, "not dreaming," says the writer, "of occupying the heights before Quebec, and totally neglecting that portion comprised between Sillery and Les Anses des Mers, deeming it impregnable;" whereas, he informs the Governor, this point should not be overlooked, since he remembers how, as a school-boy, he had scaled these heights rapidly and with no great difficulty. He then proceeds to unfold his own plan of defence. Having returned to Quebec, he notes that from the 20th to the 21st of May it froze to the thickness of two crowns. Here he finds the defensive works progressing on all sides, without any special duty having been assigned to himself, according to promise. The chief engineer "told me, with quite an embarrassed air, that he was much obliged to me, but that he could dispense with causing me any fatigue, three engineers having come to him from France," and yet, a few days later, he sees that work had been given out to several officers of the line, for which they were evidently unfitted; "this proceeding, on the part of M. de Pontleroy, does not surprise me, having seen, from the moment of his arrival in Canada, that he regarded me with jealousy, &c." That a state of ill feeling existed between the parties is further confirmed by Pontleroy's own letters to the Minister of Marine, referred to in the report on Canadian Archives for 1887 (pp. 216 and 271); April 24, 1758, he makes complaints against M. de Lotbinière, who evidently thought himself better fitted than M. de Lévy for post of chief engineer. Towards the close of July he finds fault with Lotbinière's work in the construction of Carillon, and, later on, hints at his too lavish expenditure; and, December 1, writes that "M. de Vaudreuil desired to secure the appointment of his relative, M. de Lotbinière, as chief engineer, and he, Pontleroy, when he arrived, was looked upon as an intruder, and difficulties were put in his way. He asks that M. de Vaudreuil and the Intendant be instructed to give him their support in the discharge of his duty."

This friction, to call it by no worse name, continued in the department of Royal Engineers till the enemy cast anchor before their city; all errors and oversights, so apparent to some, and to which others continued perversely

blind, remained uncorrected; the very heights which had been ignored were scaled, the decisive battle was fought, and five days later, on Sept. 18, 1759, Quebec surrendered, and the English became masters of Canada. The two leaders, Wolf and Montcalm, had both fallen, the one departing victorious and in honor, the other in the bitterness of chagrin and defeat; both sacrifices to a monarch's glory. "Heureux le général, s'il n'eût pas méprisé encore sous les murs de Québec les sages instructions qui lui donna Vaudreuil, il y a un mémoire détaillé des opérations par un officier du génie qui donne droit au Marquis," writes Bibaud, Jeune, in his "Pantheon Canadien," alluding, may we presume, to the missing portion of De Lotbinière's diary.

Returning to France, the Governor was thrown into the Bastille, and, though exonerated from all blame and finally released, died long after, burdened with poverty and years. No. 8 is a letter from his nephew, Le Chev. de Vaudreuil at Rochefort, April 27, 1762, to "M. de Lotbinière, officier du Canada, rue des bons enfans, chez M<sup>de</sup> Audry, pres de la porte du palais Royal, à Paris." It discusses some money matters, then states that Canadians are arrested daily, as the testimony of all who have returned from that country is wanted; "happy are those who have not been mixed up in any affair of government. I am quite impatient to hear the end of this matter, persuaded that it cannot terminate otherwise than advantageously for my uncle."

Two years later, Feb. 28, 1764, the same party writes from "Paris, rue garnière," to "Mons. de Lotbinière, chez M. M. guinaud négociants, à Londres." This letter, No. 9, states that the Chevalier's brother would return from St. Domingo about June; other matter, of a private nature, is referred to, and M. de L.'s son is mentioned. A small seal in black wax is attached; device same as noted in No. 5, save that the supporters are differently arranged, and that the shield is surmounted with a jewelled coronet of three strawberry leaves, and that the military order is omitted. The brother alluded to was undoubtedly Joseph Hyc. Rigaud de Vaudreuil, Governor of St. Domingo.

As early as 1764 Lotbinière made application to the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations desiring confirmation, in his favor, of two concessions of land, and in 1772 he was in England pressing his claims. One tract, called Alainville, granted him in 1758, by Governor Vaudreuil, lying partly on Lake George, partly on Crown Point River, with a frontage of over four leagues, and a depth of about five; the other tract of similar extent, lay opposite Crown Point, and was purchased in 1763 from the grantee, M. Champagne de Hocquart. These lands at the head of Lake Champlain had been annexed to the Province of New York, soon after the conquest of Canada, and set off to reduced officers of the British army. It is, perhaps, just here that No. 10 of the series comes in connection. It is written from Portmansquare (London), Feb. 6, 1774, by the Count de Belgivioso, who regrets being out when M. de L. called, and invites him to chocolate, next Monday, after 10½ A.M., as a conversation is desirable previous to an interview with the Minister, Lord Rochford.

Finally, Feb. 13, 1776, the Lords of Trade sent their opinion of the subject to the Committee of Privy Council, advising that, by way of compensation, a tract of 115,000 acres be granted the applicant in the Province of Quebec, otherwise he to pursue his claims by due course of law. That the land was accepted, the writer is not certain; his Letters Patent state that, having made a reclamation on the British government, he obtained a pension of 400 guineas, which, at the outbreak of the American Revolution,

he gave up and offered his services to France, a step which debarred his ever returning to Canada as an English subject; and that he was, in 1776, sent to Boston on a mission, "which he fulfilled with that zeal which had ever characterized his operations."

Having reached the French colony of St. Pierre de Miquelon, off the coast of Newfoundland, he sailed thence in a schooner, with two domestics and a post-chaise, and arrived, early in November, 1776, at Chatham, on Cape Cod. Proceeding to Boston, he endeavoured to open correspondence with Dr. Franklin, who had sailed for France, and with the President of Congress. He says, "At the time I left France, the commission I accepted of could not be granted without a reserve of disowning me in case things did not succeed in the manner expected," and speaks of himself as "under the double risk of being disowned by your Congress, or by the Court which has secretly employed me, as one who may, and they know can be, of the greatest service to you by his knowledge of war and politics, as well as with the local of this Continent." That he might not be regarded as a presumptuous pretender, he continues: "The whole system of defence in that country (Canada), after the defeat of Baron Dieskau, until the close of 1758, was solely my own, and that it ceased to be pursued only in the campaign of 1759, in which the *Sieur Pont le Roy*, a much older engineer than I, and who arrived in the summer of 1758, determined absolutely, in his mode of defence, to pursue the reverse of all that I had planned, &c." He writes also to his son, then a prisoner-of-war; chides him for espousing the side of England, and would like to take his place, temporarily, and send him to Canada for his mother and sister; adding "all my letters from France give me the title of Marquis. You run no risk in conforming to it."\*

He returned to Paris, and No. 11 is a note from M. de Pont le Roy (so signed), about 1779, who writes that M. le Chev. de Lévis doubts not but that M. de L. is certain as to the height of the ramparts of Quebec, and so desires me to ask for him the height of that part &c.

About this time, again in quest of the Cross of St. Louis, M. de Lotbinière wrote to M. de Sartine, Minister of the Marine. In a letter (No. 12) from Versailles, Jan. 21, 1779, the Chev. de Lévis (afterwards Duke and Marshal) informs him that he is likely to get only a polite reply; that he should make out a memoir and sign it, stating his services in detail, and that he (Lévis) will present it to the minister and urge the suit. As Lotbinière favors "the qualification of Marquis, he had better so style himself in his memoir, that the reply sent him may be so addressed. Not to ask for more than one favor at a time, 'twere well to make no mention of the rank of Colonel, and frankly he would never get it, since he had never been employed on any expedition, and I do not see that they are disposed to do anything for Canada."

The next year brings a new minister, in the person of the Marquis de Castries, who, in No. 13, writes M. de Lotbinière, from Versailles, Nov. 14, 1780, thanking him for the complimentary letter on his recent appointment. The minister would like to do something for him, but the times are so unfavorable that it is something more to be wished than hoped for. Perseverance, however, met with its reward at last, and, in recognition of his services and those of his predecessors, Michel-Alain Chartier de Lotbinière was made a Knight of St. Louis, and raised to the rank of Marquis, by the King of France, June 25, 1784, Letters Patent being filed in Paris, April 21st following; the only case of a native Canadian who attained that title. He died in New York, from yellow fever, in 1799, aged 76.

\* Force's Am. Archives, 5 S. III., 642-6, 1079-80.



His wife, whom he married in Quebec, in 1747, was Louise-Madelaine, daughter of Gaspard Chaussegros de Lévy (or De Léry), Engineer of the Marine, and Knight of St. Louis. De Lévy, who died in March, 1756, had a son, Gaspard-Joseph, also an engineer, who, at the age of 32, in September, 1753, married Louise-Martel de Brouage, some seventeen years his junior; this, the first Canadian couple presented at the English Court, drew from his Royal Majesty the complimentary remark that if all Canadian ladies resembled M<sup>me</sup> de Lévy, he had indeed made "une belle conquête."

The Marquis's son, who inherited the title upon his father's decease, was Michel-Eustache-Gaspard-Alain Chartier de Lotbinière, born Aug. 31, 1748, who now held the Seigneurie and Chateau of Vaudreuil, with the Seigneuries of Rigaud and Beauharnois. He was at first a cadet in the 2d company of artillery, Capt. Azemard de Lusignan, in Canada, and, at the outbreak of the American Revolution, served as a captain at the Blockhouse of St. John: as a prisoner-of-war he had an allowance from Congress of two dollars per week from Nov. 2, 1775.\* The last letter of the collection (No. 14) is addressed to him by Gov. Tryon, dated New York, Feb. 28, 1777, 9 A. M.; the Governor presenting his compliments and inviting Capt. Lotbinière to an interview in half an hour: "D'jeuner est pret.—Note Le Gouverneur sorte de sa maison à dix heures." In July, 1788, Capt. L. was placed by Lord Dorchester on a list of those worthy of recompense for their services, his award being 700 acres in the parish of L'Assomption. During the last war with England he was colonel of the militia of Vaudreuil. He was prominent as a Canadian statesman; was elected to the Chamber of Assembly, and unanimously named speaker in 1793; four years later he was called to the Legislative Council, and it was through his efforts that the French language was retained in the Legislature, and a larger share in the administration of affairs secured to the French Canadians. Dying in 1821, at the age of 73, the male line of the race became extinct. His youngest daughter Julie Christine, b. June, 1810, m. Gaspard-Peire-Gustave Joly, one of whose sons, M. de Lotbinière Joly, was killed at the assault of Delhi in September, 1857. The family name is still retained in that of a county of 735 square miles, and its seat of justice; Lotbinière having been represented, in 1861, in the Canadian Assembly, by Henry Gustave Joly, b. Dec. 5, 1829, the Premier of 1878, afterwards leader of the opposition, and recently knighted.

The Chateau Vaudreuil, purchased by the first Marquis de Lotbinière in 1767, from his kinsmen (the family of the original founder), became subsequently the College de St. Raphaël. Destroyed in later years by fire, there was found under the foundation-stone, at the southeast angle, a leaden plate stamped with three fleurs de lys, and bearing this inscription, "Cette pierre a été posée par Dame Louise Elyzabeth de Joybert, femme de Haut et Puissant Seigneur Philippe de Rigaud, Chevalier, Marquis de Vaudreuil, Grand Croix de l'Ordre Militaire de St. Louis, Gouverneur et Lieutenant-Général pour le Roi de toute la Nouvelle-France Septentrionale, en 1723, ce 15 Mar." †.

\* The Rev. M. Louis Lotbinière was appointed by Gen. Arnold, in Jan., 1776, as Chaplain to Col. James Livingston's Regt., and, after the retreat from Canada, was continued a Chaplain in the pay of the U. S.

† In the roll of papers were two printed articles; one, a notice of services on Monday, March 19, 1784, at 4 P. M., in the Church of the R. R. P. P. Théatins, for the benefit of the Enfants-Trouvés; Sermon by the Abbé Rousseau; ~~about~~ to be sent to Dowager Duchess de Cossé-Brissac; the other an Enlistment-Blank, 179 (\*), for a private in the Infantry of the United States, during "the existing differences" with the French Republic; to be sworn to before a Justice of the Peace.

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